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Report on the mid-term review of the fifth country programmes of UNDP and of UNFPA for Tunisia

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. The purpose of the mid-term review of the fifth country programmes of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) for Tunisia - the first joint exercise in the Arab region - is to assess the progress achieved in their implementation midway through the cycle and to determine whether the resources allocated to the programmes were used judiciously. The conclusions of this review will help to lay the groundwork for the preparation of the next programming cycle (1997-2001).

2. In accordance with the guidelines adopted by the General Assembly, particularly in its resolution 47/199 of 22 December 1992, this joint review of UNDP and UNFPA country programmes is designed to achieve common, system-wide United Nations action in support of national development.

3. Despite the limited resources available to the country, it was unanimously agreed that the principal aim of the UNDP and UNFPA country programmes should be to strengthen the dimension of sustainable human development. This dimension will form the basis for future cooperation.

II. METHODOLOGY

4. The review was prepared by the UNDP and UNFPA office in Tunis in close cooperation with the Tunisian Government, the Regional Bureau for Arab States at UNDP headquarters and the Division for Arab States and Europe at UNFPA headquarters.

5. On the basis of a document entitled "Mid-term review of UNDP and UNFPA country programmes 1992-1996: Financial situation and status", prepared by UNDP and UNFPA and submitted to the Government in January 1994, regular contacts made it possible to identify five themes to be addressed in detail during the mid-term review and to prepare a thematic document which would form the basis for discussion of the country programmes. These documents were discussed extensively with both the national authorities and the programmes and agencies of the United Nations system represented in Tunisia.

6. The review of the UNDP/UNFPA programmes took place on 30 June and 1 July 1994 in the presence of all the national departments concerned, the agencies and programmes of the United Nations system represented in Tunisia and two representatives from UNDP and UNFPA headquarters. The in-depth review confirmed that there was consensus on both the impact of past and current cooperation and the direction of future cooperation.

III. NATIONAL GOALS AND PRIORITIES

7. Having obtained positive results from the structural adjustment programme it adopted in 1986, Tunisia made efforts within the framework of its eighth plan (1992-1996) to accelerate the reforms it had undertaken with a view to

increasing its economic competitiveness and becoming integrated more fully into the world economy.

8. The main objectives of the national plan, which was evaluated in 1994, can be summarized as follows:

(a) Control of population growth and regional equilibrium;

(b) Domestic and external financial equilibrium;

(c) Increase in agricultural and food production;

(d) Liberalization and reform of economic structures;

(e) Increased competitiveness of the industrial sector;

(f) Social advancement and job development;

(g) Harmonization of economic growth and environmental protection.

9. The evaluation of the plan confirmed that activities were proceeding satisfactorily and that new reforms were being implemented in order to make the Tunisian economy more open to its environment, including, inter alia, the Arab Maghreb Union (AMU), the European Union and the agreements under the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT).

IV. ASSESSMENT OF THE ONGOING PROGRAMMES

A. Relevance of the current programmes

1. UNDP country programme

10. The annual review conducted in July 1993 established the consistency of the activities undertaken with the initial objectives of the country programme, and of the latter with national development goals. The relevance of the country programme in support of national efforts is illustrated by the strategic role played by UNDP at the request of the Government in the following areas:

(a) Human development (round table of June 1993);

(b) Vocational and job training (workshop of May 1993);

(c) Poverty reduction campaign (plan of action of October 1992 deliberated by a meeting of certain members of the ministerial council chaired by the President of the Republic);

(d) Promotion of the private sector (round table of January 1994).

11. In addition, agricultural development and environmental protection activities under the UNDP programme were instrumental in realizing the goals of the eighth plan and the national plans of action in these two strategic sectors.

12. Although industrial and trade adjustment was one of the initial objectives of the country programme, the translation of these objectives into supportive action is still behind schedule. This situation is a source of major concern to UNDP and the Government, particularly as the constant erosion of resources under the indicative planning figure (IPF) has sharply reduced the available balance.

2. UNFPA country programme

13. The national structures are regularly consulted on the implementation of the programme. Its quantitative objectives include: (a) bringing the population growth rate down to 1.8 per cent by the year 2001, compared to 2.15 per cent in 1988; and (b) bringing contraceptive use up to 64.5 per cent by the year 2001, compared to 49.8 per cent in 1988. According to 1992 figures, the natural growth rate was 1.92 per cent; contraceptive use stood at 54.1 per cent.

B. Programme objectives and preliminary impact

14. The various UNDP projects were designed in accordance with the recommended commitment curve, while the allocation of resources by area of concentration is different from what was originally contemplated.

15. Concerning UNFPA, 83.4 per cent of the funds were approved, leaving an unprogrammed balance of 16.6 per cent (or $1,655,363). Resources were allocated in accordance with the initial approval by area of concentration (except for reserve funds, which slightly exceeded the limit).

16. The type of activity conducted under each programme differs according to the area of concentration. The following inputs have been provided:

(a) Increase in agricultural and food production

- Institutional and national capacity-building: training, elaboration of tools for the implementation and follow-up of strategies, and coordination/cooperation;

- Exchange of information/experience with other countries which have similar characteristics;

- Strengthening of information, education and communication activities; implementation of an interregional coordination system and an information management system; and support to operational research;

(b) Information, education and communication in the population field

- Support for the institutionalization of population education at all levels of formal education (training of future teachers, inspectors, journalists and communicators), elaboration of teaching materials and strengthening of the professional capacities of workers in the social advancement field.

(c) Collection and analysis of population data

- Strengthening of the system of data on civil status (decentralization/training), and support, at the national and regional levels, for the collection, analysis and utilization of reliable data on family planning (introduction of a management system, fertility survey, etc.).

(d) Women, population and development

- Integration of population education into the curricula of training centres for girls, and support to a national non-governmental organization working to improve health conditions for women and children;

- Institutional and national capacity-building (data bank on women), and elaboration of an information-education-communication strategy on women, population and development.

C. Regional programmes

17. The UNDP and UNFPA country programmes complement regional programmes, as both are designed to contribute to the attainment of the development goals of the countries of the region. The country strategy note to be prepared in 1995 within the context of the next programming cycle will continue to enhance this complementarity by integrating it into the programme-design phase.

V. THEMES

A. Coordination

18. The Government is responsible for coordinating external assistance. In order to consolidate and harmonize this coordination, the establishment of a follow-up committee, composed of representatives of the relevant ministries, is proposed. The UNDP country programme is designed to form the basis for the coordination of operational activities of the United Nations system, while the UNFPA country programme must play a leading role in encouraging other donors to provide assistance in the population field. The mechanism administered by the resident coordinator ensures the exchange of information, the coordination of agency activities and consolidation of the programme approach. Coordination will be strengthened through a more systematic exchange of information between the Government and the resident coordinator. The cohesion of operational activities of the United Nations system will be more effectively enhanced through the country strategy note.

B. National execution of projects

19. The UNDP country programme provides for the adoption of measures to ensure national execution of projects. Sixty-six per cent of projects (in number) are

now expected to be executed by the Government, compared to only 26 per cent during the fourth programming cycle, representing 81 per cent in terms of financing, as opposed to 24 per cent during the previous cycle.

20. UNFPA projects currently under way are all directly executed by the Government, with the exception of the project executed in conjunction with the Population Research and Study Institute. This approach is also being taken by UNDP and UNFPA regional projects currently under way. The use of national consultants has become widespread and has proven effective and beneficial. The specialized agencies of the United Nations system are most often involved through the execution of certain components, particularly the use of specific international expertise. The overall result of this execution modality has been positive, even though some training and improvements in national management procedures remain necessary.

C. Support for increasing the competitiveness of the Tunisian economy

21. Under the eighth plan, Tunisia is working to accelerate the reforms in order to increase the competitiveness and efficiency of its economy and to ensure its integration into the world economy.

22. UNDP has made some contribution to these efforts by identifying activities and measures that would help to promote industrial restructuring and by drawing up development strategies for priority sectors.

D. Sustainable human development and prospects for cooperation

23. In addition to the promotion of the specific themes proposed by the Governing Council in its decision 90/34 (poverty eradication, participatory development, promotion of the private sector, etc.), the current UNDP programme is designed to integrate the dimension of sustainable human development into the various activities undertaken.

24. The way was paved through the holding of a round table on human development in 1993. To summarize, the exact content and quantitative objectives of a Tunisian policy on sustainable human development, which will be reflected in the country strategy note, will emerge from the process of formulating Tunisia's Agenda 21 and strategic studies conducted in the context of preparations for the ninth plan.

VI. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

25. The conclusions and recommendations of the mid-term review concern the following areas:

(a) Development of agricultural production

The results obtained by the projects are considered satisfactory. The goals selected remain relevant and the results obtained thus far augur well for a lasting impact at the end of the cycle. The limitations of the remaining resources available do not permit new projects to be approved. The following recommendations should ensure the greatest possible impact from UNDP support to national efforts:

(i) Provision of support for the performance of ongoing projects through administrative improvements to strengthen national execution capacity;

(ii) Formulation of projects with a view to mobilizing additional resources or an advance allocation of resources from the next cycle;

(iii) Promotion of national expertise by making better use of the Agence tunisienne de coopération technique in order to make other countries aware of Tunisian experience and expertise;

(iv) Increased involvement of private agencies in the liberalization of the agricultural and agri-foodstuffs sector.

(b) Support to the industrial and trade adjustment programme

Taking into account the balance of available IPF funds, it is recommended that UNDP support should be limited to a pilot project of assistance to businesses, based on a new relationship between UNDP and the private sector that will concentrate on human resources training and support to privatization.

(c) Environmental protection

(i) Monitoring of project execution in accordance with established work plans and budgets; (ii) approval and initiation of recently formulated projects; (iii) establishment of a pipeline of projects financed from the Global Environment Facility (GEF), especially in the energy sector; and (iv) continued support to the dynamic partnership with associations and non-governmental organizations.

(d) Support to social policies and administrative reforms

(i) Development of the social dimension of the next country programme; (ii) support to the Government in seeking financing for the activities of the National Solidarity Fund; (iii) heightening of awareness of Tunisia's experience in the reform of vocational training and employment; and (iv) evaluation of the achievements of the project undertaken under the Management Development Programme in order to be able to determine the content of a new support programme.

(e) Population policy

(i) Acceleration of the completion and approval of the project for the integration of population policies into regional and central planning; and

(ii) support to the Government in drawing up a document on national population policy.

(f) Maternal and child health/family planning (MCH/FP)

(i) Support for the formulation of a specific strategy for disadvantaged areas; (ii) formulation of a specific information, education and communication strategy for family health; (iii) support to the Government in developing a long-term MCH/FP strategy to mobilize additional resources; and (iv) strengthening of Tunisia's role in South-South cooperation in MCH/FP.

(g) Information, education and communication on population

(i) Strengthening of the discipline of population studies in university curricula; (ii) introduction of population education in vocational training centres and in the army; and (iii) establishment of a coordination mechanism for those active in the information, education and communication field.

(h) Collection and analysis of population data

(i) Completion as soon as possible of the computerized information management system for the National Office for the Family and Population; (ii) utilization of the $120,000 available for this sector; (iii) utilization of Tunisia's experience for South-South cooperation; and (iv) mobilization of additional resources to support the Office in operational research.

(i) Women, population and development

(i) Improvement of the quality of training offered to women and girls in disadvantaged areas; (ii) strengthening of the executing agencies for women-population-development programmes, which are relatively new and lack resources and staff; (iii) encouragement of participation of Tunisian institutions in the preparation of major international conferences; (iv) further strengthening of the role of women in income-generating activities; and (v) support for the formulation of a genuine strategy for the integration of women in development.

(j) Regional programmes

(i) Fullest possible use of the combined effect of national and regional programmes once the new UNDP regional programme has been prepared; (ii) provision of greater support for integration within the Maghreb; and (iii) strengthening and expansion of the use of Tunisian expertise in the population field to benefit South-South cooperation.

(k) Coordination

(i) Action to ensure that the resident coordinator is informed systematically of all proposals or requests addressed to the United Nations system in order for him to play a more effective role; and (ii) institution of a coordination mechanism through the establishment of a follow-up committee.

(l) National execution

(i) Increased involvement of administrative and financial officials in project formulation; (ii) regular circulation of information and reminders of reporting obligations and provision of ongoing training for managers; (iii) access to a committed and receptive national director; (iv) utilization of the interdepartmental follow-up committee to gather information in order to identify and solve common problems; and (v) better use of databank of the Agence tunisienne de coopération technique in order to harness national expertise.

(m) Sustainable human development

(i) Development of a profile of sustainable human development for Tunisia that will contribute to the preparation of the country strategy note and the sixth cycle; (ii) action to ensure that the country strategy note to be drafted in 1995 highlights Tunisia's sustainable human development priorities and provides for future United Nations system intervention to promote sustainable human development; and (iii) efforts to enable disadvantaged areas to make up for their delays in sustainable human development and mobilization of additional resources for this purpose.

(n) Support to the competitiveness of the Tunisian economy

(i) Allocation of resources in the next cycle for support to the reforms undertaken by Tunisia in the areas of increased economic liberalization, interest-rate reform, reform of the stock market and privatization of enterprises; and (ii) support for integrating the future free-trade zone with the European Union and within the Maghreb.

(o) Resource mobilization

(i) Utilization of non-IPF financing opportunities; (ii) efforts to secure financing from other donors and involve UNDP and UNFPA in the exercise, in particular through the preparation of a pipeline of projects; and (iii) assistance to Tunisia in gaining the best advantage from its experience and examples of success with potential investors as well as in South-South cooperation.

(p) Financial situation

UNDP programme: programming of the remaining sum of $305,598 for activities to support industrial and trade adjustment.

UNFPA programme:

(i) Drawing up of priority projects for utilizing the balance ($1,655,363);

(ii) Identification of resources ($2,808,847) for financing the project devoted to family health in rural areas, which has already been formulated and approved.

Annex

FINANCIAL SUMMARY OF THE UNDP COUNTRY PROGRAMME

I. RESOURCES

A. Resources available for country programme period

	$	$
IPF	5 669 000 a/	
Estimated cost-sharing	3 000 000	
Joint programme funding	-	
Total		8 669 000

B. Commitments

Approved programme/project budgets b/

Approved and allocated IPF	4 550 902	
Approved and unallocated IPF	-	
		4 550 902
Cost-sharing: approved and allocated	2 310 000	
Cost-sharing: approved and unallocated	-	
		2 310 000
Pipeline programmes/projects		
IPF	-	
Cost-sharing	-	-
TOTAL		6 860 902

C. Balance of resources available for further programming

IPF	812 500	
Cost-sharing	690 000	
		1 502 500
Pipeline programmes/projects for the programming period		
Budgets approved for pipeline programmes and projects		8 363 402
Balance of resources available		305 598

(Footnotes on following page)

(Footnotes to table)

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a/ An IPF of $7,978,000 had originally been anticipated for the third country programme; the reduction results from the 70-per-cent IPF programming limitation and the borrowing of $84,000 from the fourth cycle.

b/ "Approved and allocated" refer to those programmes and projects approved by the Action Committee or Bureau PAC for which there exist detailed, signed documents and budgets. "Approved and unallocated" represent the balance of funds available to the programme or project which have yet to be reflected in specific budget lines.

c/ This figure represents the net balance of IPF and cost-sharing resources available plus joint programme funding less approved and allocated/ unallocated IPF and cost-sharing funding less pipeline IPF and cost-sharing.

II. PROPOSED (P) AND ACTUAL (A) ALLOCATION OF RESOURCES BY AREA OF CONCENTRATION

Area of concentration	IPF		Percentage of total	
	(P)	(A)	(P)	(A)
Sustainable growth in agriculture	1 984	2 547	35	42.6
Increased industrial productivity and competitiveness	1 701	496	30	7.9
Energy, mineral resources and environmental management	1 134	1 195	20	27.9
Improvements in social infrastructure	850	1 125	15	18.1
Unprogrammed reserve	-	306	-	3.5
Total	5 669	5 669	100	100

III. ESTIMATED COMPLEMENTARY ASSISTANCE FROM OTHER SOURCES

	At time of formulation of country programme	At time of mid-term review
A. UNDP-administered funds	-	1 022 937
B. Other United Nations resources	-	32 000
C. Non-United Nations resources	-	502 930
TOTAL		1 557 867